



**The
Constitution
of the
Diocese of
Easton**

ARTICLE I

Acceding to the Constitution and Canons of the Church.

The Church in the Diocese of Easton, as a constituent part of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, accedes to the Constitution of that Church and acknowledges the authority of its Canons.

ARTICLE II

Ecclesiastical Authority

The Bishop shall be the Ecclesiastical Authority. In case of his or her absence or disability, he or she may temporarily place in charge the Bishop Coadjutor or the Suffragan Bishop, in that order, if there be either or both; if there be neither, he or she may authorize the Standing Committee to act. Such authorization shall be made if the absence or disability exceed six (6) months; and in all cases such authorization shall be made and revoked in writing. If no Bishop be actually or canonically qualified and able to act, the Standing Committee shall be the Ecclesiastical Authority.

Journal of 1996, pp. 16 & 57: Gender neutral language was adopted.

ARTICLE III

Annual Convention

Sec. 1. **Time and Place.**

There shall be an Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Easton at the time and place provided therefore by canon, unless the Bishop, with the advice of the Standing Committee, shall appoint another time or place.

Sec. 2. **Notice of Meeting.**

On or before sixty (60) days prior to Annual Convention the Secretary of Convention shall send notice of the Convention to the Registrar of each parish and separate congregation and to the similar officer of the congregation of Trinity Cathedral and of each diocesan mission, with or without a rector, to all clerics, and to all other persons entitled to a seat, with or without a vote, in Convention by reason of their office.

Sec. 3. **Composition of Convention.**

The convention shall be composed of clerics and lay delegates.

Sec. 4. **Seat and Vote in Convention.**

If they be otherwise qualified, the following shall have a seat and vote in Convention.

- (a) **Clergy.**
 - (i) The Bishop; and the Bishop Coadjutor and Suffragan, if there be one or both.
 - (ii) Every cleric, not under ecclesiastical censure, who shall have been certified by the Ecclesiastical Authority as a parochial cleric canonically resident in the Diocese and who is other than a perpetual deacon.
 - (iii) Every non-parochial cleric, not under ecclesiastical censure, who shall have been certified by the Ecclesiastical **Authority** as a non-parochial cleric, canonically resident in this Diocese, and who shall have made the annual report required by the canons of General Convention.
 - (iv) Every Deacon, not under ecclesiastical censure, who shall have been certified by the Ecclesiastical Authority as a Deacon, canonically resident in this Diocese.

Journal of 1998, pp. 90 & 143: Sec 7 (a) (i) referring to perpetual deacon was deleted and Sec. 4 (iv) added to give Deacons voice and vote at Convention.

- (b) **Layperson.**
 - (i) Each lay delegate shall be a confirmed member of the Church. One or more lay delegates shall be elected from each parish. For all purposes of this Article, the word parish shall include each separate congregation, and diocesan mission in the Diocese, and the enrolled members of Trinity Cathedral who are members of no other congregation.
 - (ii) Each parish, as above defined shall be entitled to such lay representation based upon its number of communicants in good standing, as set forth in the annual parochial or similar report filed for the calendar year preceding the date of Convention, as shall be set forth in the canons of this Diocese.

Journal of 2003, p. 9 and Journal of 2002, pp 10,11 and 28: deleted the sanction of a lay delegate losing his or her vote because a parish did not pay its asking or file its parochial report

Sec. 5. **Qualifications of Delegates and Their Alternates.**

The Convention shall have power and authority by canon to determine the qualifications of clerical and lay delegates and their alternates to an annual or to a special Convention; provided, however, that any delegate or delegation disqualified under such regulations shall have the right of appeal to the Convention.

Sec. 6. **Election of Lay Delegates.**

At the annual congregational meeting, or a special meeting called for the purpose, the qualified voters of each parish as defined in Section 4 above (for the purposes of this paragraph, such qualified voters shall be the persons defined in *Article 23, Section 299(a) of the Annotated Codes of Maryland (1957)* extended to include members of separate congregations, diocesan missions, and the congregation of Trinity Cathedral as well as members of parishes) at least forty (40) days before the convening of the next Diocesan Convention, shall elect from among its confirmed members, the number of lay delegates and their alternates prescribed by Section 4(b) of this Article. If for any reason, the qualified voters of any parish fail to elect the appropriate number of delegates and alternates, or if any of those elected cannot serve after being elected, then the Vestry or governing body of such parish shall have the power to choose one or more qualified delegates or alternates, as the case may be, to fill the vacancy.

Sec. 7 **Seat Without Vote in Convention.**

(a) **Clergy**

The following shall have a seat in a Convention with the right to debate but not to vote unless otherwise qualified.

(i) Dean of Convocation

(b) **Laypersons.**

The following laypersons shall have a seat in a Convention with the right to debate but not to vote unless otherwise qualified:

(i) The Chancellor of the Diocese;

(ii) The Secretary of Convention;

(iii) The Treasurer of Convention;

(iv) The Registrar;

(v) Lay members of the Standing Committee;

(vi) Lay members of the Diocesan Council;

(vii) Lay members of the Committee on Constitution and Canons;

(viii) Alternate lay delegates to Diocesan Convention.

Journal of 1998, pp. 90 & 143: Sec 7 (a) (i) referring to perpetual deacon was deleted and Sec. 4 (iv) added to give Deacons voice and vote at Convention.

Journal of 1965, p. 38: Journal of 1966, pp. 11, 37: This Article was revised to give Trinity Cathedral and diocesan missions voice and vote in Convention.

Journal of 1970, pp. 17, 38: Section 4(b) was amended to provide that each lay delegate from a diocesan mission should have a full vote in the Convention and that parishes should have additional delegates on the basis of the number of communicants in good standing as set forth in Section 4(b) (ii). The prior provision for an additional lay delegate for each priest in a parish in excess of one priest was repealed. In the original consideration in the 1969 Convention (1969 Journal pp. 16 - 17) there was added by amendment a requirement that the parish pay not only its Convention Fund assessment, but also its Shared Objective apportionment, in order for its lay delegate to be seated. This amendment was deleted in the 1970 Convention, and the confirming amendment of Canon 15 was accordingly not adopted;

Journal of 1971, p. 24: Section 1 was amended, after initial approval in 1970, to fix Convention at Trinity Cathedral in November. The month approved in 1970 Convention was changed to November at the 1971 Convention.

Journal of 1972, pp. 17, 44: Section 4 (b) (i) was amended to move the requirements for vote to a separate paragraph- Section 4 (b) (iii) was added to state such requirements for vote in Convention, and to conform the requirement for annual report to the change in date of Convention and to Canon 64.

Journal of 1974, pp. 20, 25, 50: Section 4 (a) (ii) and (iii) were amended to delete six-month residency prior to Convention requirements for right to vote for both parochial and non-parochial clergymen; and Section 7 (a) (ii), providing for a seat for clergypersons with less than six months residence, was deleted.

Journal of 1976, pp. 21, 22, 53, 55: Section 4 (b) (iii) was amended to qualify the loss of vote in Convention because of failure to file the parochial report before the date required by Canon, only if there is a failure to pay the penalty imposed by Canon for such failure.

Journal of 1977, pp. 25, 59: Section 4 (b) and Section 7 were amended to provide that the number of lay delegates be established by Canon and give alternate lay delegates voice (but no vote) in Convention.

Journal of 1977, pp. 25, 60: Section 6 was amended to agree with the amendment of Section 4 (b) and to make other minor wording changes.

Journal of 1978, pp. 22, 49: Section I amended to provide that the time and place of Annual Convention shall be established by canon. See Canon 9.A. Section 4 (b) (iii) amended substituting term Diocesan Fund Budget for Convention Fund.

Journal of 1984, p. 35: Section 3 was amended to require 60 days prior notice of Annual Convention.

Journal of 1988, p. 57: The Convention amended Canon 33, to permit the Bishop to appoint as Dean of Convocation a priest, physically resident in the Convocation but not necessarily canonically resident. Section 7 (a) was amended to permit such a Dean to have a seat in Convention but without vote.

ARTICLE IV Special Convention

Sec. 1. **When Requisite - Time and Place.**

Whenever it shall appear requisite for the good of the Church, the Bishop may call a special meeting of the Convention at such time and place as he or she shall determine; but if there be no Bishop actually or canonically qualified and able to act, such authority shall be exercised by the Standing Committee.

Sec. 2. **Notice of Meeting.**

The convener shall send, or cause to be sent, written notice of such special meeting specifying the time, place and business to be acted upon, at least thirty (30) days before the day of meeting, to the registrar of every parish and separate congregation and to the similar officer of the congregation of Trinity Cathedral and of each diocesan mission, with or without a rector, and to all clergypersons, all lay delegates and their alternates, if known, and all other persons entitled to a seat or vote in Convention by reason of their office.

Sec. 3. **Delegates.**

- (a) **Clerical Delegates.** All clergy, qualified as for an annual Convention, shall be entitled to a seat or vote in a special Convention.
- (b) **Lay Delegates.** Lay delegates and their alternates, elected to the previous annual Convention and therein qualified, shall serve as delegates and alternates to any special Convention held during the Convention year; provided, however, that if any lay delegation to the previous annual Convention shall have been disqualified, such delegation may present its case before the special Convention, and said special Convention shall have power and authority to take appropriate action thereon.

Journal of 1965, p. 38: Journal of 1966, pp. 11, 37: Amended Sec. 2 to reflect fact that Trinity Cathedral and diocesan missions were given a vote in Convention.

ARTICLE V Election of a Bishop

- Sec. 1. **Special Convention - Time and Place.**
The election of a Bishop, Bishop Coadjutor or Suffragan, shall take place at a Special Convention called for the stated purpose by the Bishop, with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee, or by the Standing Committee if there be no Bishop. Such Convention shall be held at such time and place as the convener may appoint.
- Sec. 2. **Notice of Meeting.**
The convener shall send, or cause to be sent, written notice of the time, place and purpose of the special Convention for the election of a Bishop, Bishop Coadjutor or Suffragan, at least sixty (60) days before the day of said meeting to all persons entitled to such notice under Article III, Sec. 2.
- Sec. 3. **Convention Procedure.**
 - (a) **Clergy and Laity to Vote by Orders.**
The election of a Bishop, whether Diocesan, Coadjutor or Suffragan, shall be made in open Convention by the concurrent vote of the clergy and laity, voting separately by ballot, the clergy first and then laity; and a concurrent majority of those present and entitled to vote in each order shall be necessary to a choice.
 - (b) **Limitation of Action.**
No business other than the election of a Bishop and other relevant business pertaining thereto or to the Episcopate shall be transacted at a special Convention for such election.

Journal of 1972, pp. 17, 44: Section 3 (a) was amended to add Present and" in the required concurrent majority

Journal of 1975, pp. 30, 54, 55: Section 1 was amended to permit the Bishop of the Diocese, if one, to call a special Convention with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee, to elect his or her successor.

Journal of 2003, p. 10, and Journal of 2004, p. 9: amended Section 1 to permit a special Convention to be held in a place other than Trinity Cathedral.

ARTICLE VI

Transaction of Business in Convention

Sec. 1. **President of Convention.**

The Bishop, or the Bishop Coadjutor or Suffragan, in that order, if there be one or both, shall be president of the Convention and shall preside at all sessions thereof. If the Episcopate be vacant, the Convention, immediately upon assembling, shall elect a priest of the Diocese as president, who shall preside until the next regular session of the Convention, or until a Bishop be consecrated.

Sec. 2. **Quorum.**

Two-thirds (2/3) of the clergy canonically resident in the Diocese and two-thirds (2/3) of the elected lay delegates shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser number may adjourn.

Sec. 3. **Deliberation.**

The clergy and laity shall deliberate on all matters as one body. The convention shall adopt such rules and regulations as will ensure orderly procedure in its deliberations.

Sec. 4. **Vote by Orders.**

A vote by orders shall be taken on any question when it shall be required by the joint request of any five members of the Convention entitled to vote, or when it shall be specifically required by the Constitution or Canons of the Diocese.

Sec. 5. **Officer or Committee Holding Over.**

Whenever there shall be a failure or omission to elect any officer or committee, the person or persons then in office, or on such committee, shall continue to act until a successor shall be chosen.

ARTICLE VII

Officers of Convention

Sec. 1. **Secretary.**

The annual Convention, immediately upon assembling, shall elect a Secretary of Convention, who shall hold office until the next annual election of a Secretary.

- Sec. 2. **Treasurer and Registrar.**
The Convention shall annually elect a Treasurer and a Registrar, who shall hold office until the election of their respective successors.
- Sec. 3. **Filling of Vacancies.**
A vacancy occurring in the office of the aforesaid Convention officers while the Convention is not in session shall be filled by the Bishop with the advice of the Standing Committee, the appointee to hold office until his or her successor shall be elected by the next annual Convention.
- Sec. 4. **Removal from Office.**
If, while the Convention is not in session, a majority of the whole number of the members of the Diocesan Council shall deem it necessary or expedient to remove from office any of the above mentioned Convention officers, the reason therefore shall be communicated to the Bishop in writing; and the Bishop, thereupon shall call a special meeting of the Standing Committee to consider the matter. If, upon hearing the charges and the defense, if any, the Standing Committee, or a majority of the whole membership thereof, shall find such removal in the best interest of the Diocese, and if the Bishop shall concur in such judgment, such removal shall be ordered by the Bishop, and the vacancy shall be filled as provided in Section 3 of this Article.

ARTICLE VIII Chancellor of the Diocese

- Sec. 1. **Appointment.**
At each annual Convention, the Bishop, by and with the advice and consent of the Convention, shall appoint as Chancellor of the Diocese, for a term of one year, or until the next annual convention, a layperson who shall be
- (a) confirmed member of the Church,
 - (b) a resident in this Diocese for three years last past, and
 - (c) a lawyer admitted to practice law in this State by the Court of Appeals of Maryland.
- Sec. 2. **Vacancy in Office.**
A vacancy in the Chancellorship, between sessions of the Convention for whatever cause, shall be filled by the Bishop by and with the advice of the Standing Committee; the appointee to serve until his or her successor is appointed and approved at the next annual Convention.
- Sec. 3. **Removal from Office.**
If, in the best interests of the Diocese, it should become necessary to remove the Chancellor from office between sessions of the Convention,

the procedure shall be the same as that provided for the removal of an officer of convention.

ARTICLE IX
Standing Committee

- Sec. 1. **Composition.**
The Standing Committee shall consist of six (6) members, three (3) of whom shall be priests actively engaged in the work of the Church and canonically resident in this Diocese, and three (3) laypersons who shall be confirmed members of the Church and resident in the Diocese.
- Sec. 2. **Election of Committee - Tenure.**
The Convention shall annually elect one (1) cleric and one (1) layperson, qualified as aforesaid, as members of the Standing Committee; said members shall serve for a period of three (3) years, or until their successors are elected, and shall not be eligible for re-election for a period of one (1) year after the expiration of their term of office.
- Sec. 3. **Vacancy in Committee.**
A vacancy in the Standing Committee shall be filled by the remaining members, or a majority of them, from the order in which the vacancy occurs; the appointee to hold office until his or her successor shall be elected by the next annual Convention.
- Sec. 4. **Function.**
The Standing Committee shall perform all such functions as may be committed to it by the Constitution and Canons of General Convention and such other functions as may be prescribed by the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese; and, with the consent of the Bishop, exercise authority over such other matters of concern to the Convention as are not specifically referred elsewhere.

ARTICLE X
Diocesan Council

- Sec. 1. **Members of Council.**
The Diocesan Council of the Diocese shall be composed of the Bishop, together with the Bishop Coadjutor and Suffragan, if there be one or both, one (1) clerical and two (2) lay representatives from each Convocation, three (3) clergy and three (3) lay representatives elected at large by Convention, and, if the Episcopate be vacant, the President of the Standing Committee. . The clergy from each Convocation and those

elected at large by the Convention shall be actively engaged in the work of the Church and canonically resident in this Diocese.

Sec. 2. **Elected Members - Tenure.**

The Convention shall annually elect one (1) representative from each order for a term of three (3) years. In addition, the Convention shall also elect one (1) clerical and two (2) lay representatives from each convocation for a term of three (3) years, such elections to be rotated so that annually one convocational clergy representative is elected, and two persons in the lay order are elected, one each from the other two convocations.

Sec. 3. **Limitation of Tenure.**

No elected member of either order shall be eligible for re-election after having served one full term until one convention year shall have elapsed after the expiration of said term, except in the case where a person fills an unexpired term for one year or less, in which case that person shall be eligible for election to a full term without one convention year having elapsed.

Sec. 4. **Vacancies in Council.**

A vacancy in the elected members shall be filled by the remaining members of the Council, or a majority of them, for the remainder of the term of the one whose membership has terminated.

Sec. 5. **President of Council.**

The Bishop shall be president of the Council, but, if the Episcopate be vacant or the Bishop be absent, the vice-president shall preside.

Sec. 6. **Function.**

(a) The Diocesan Council shall have charge of the unification, development and prosecution of missionary work, Church extension, all branches of Christian education, Christian social relations, publicity and promotion as directed by the Convention, and also shall have charge of the initiation and development of new work in these and related fields between the sessions of the Convention.

(b) The Diocesan Council shall have charge of the administration of the budgets of the Convention, and all matters relating either expressly or by implication to the expenditure of funds shall be referred to the Diocesan Council, and in addition, it shall exercise general supervision over the financial affairs of the Diocese.

(c) The Diocesan Council shall manage the business and secular affairs of the Diocese between sessions of Convention and may exercise all the powers of the corporation in the conduct of its

affairs in the normal and ordinary course of business, except those conferred on or reserved to the Diocesan Convention exclusively by law, by the ecclesiastical authority, or the Diocesan Convention, or by the national or Diocesan Constitution or Canons. The Diocesan Council shall also have charge of such other matters as may be specifically committed to it from time to time by resolution of the convention or by any canon.

Journal of 1971, p. 23: The title of Executive Council was changed to Diocesan Council in order to eliminate confusion with the Executive Council of the national church. Corresponding changes have been made in various canons to conform, but without annotation.

Journal of 1972, pp. 17, 43: Sections 1 and 2 were amended to provide a lay representative on the Diocesan Council from each Convocation, serving two-year terms, plus four lay representatives, two of whom are elected each year to two-year terms. Lay representation is thus increased. There was a third section of the amendatory resolution, which is not reproduced here since it applies only during the first year that the new composition is effective, and which provides for the three lay members elected in 1971 at large to serve the remainder of their terms. The term of the Dean of Convocation is extended to two years by amendment of Canon 33.

Journal of 1985, pp. 55, 75: Section 6 (c) was amended in order to clarify the authority of the Diocesan Council as the equivalent of a corporate Board of Directors which it is.

Journal of 1988, p. 58: Sections 1 and 2 were amended to permit each Convocation to recommend its clerical representative for election to the Diocesan Council, rather than being represented by its dean who was appointed by the Bishop.

Journal of 1993, p. 98: Section 1, Section 2, and Section 3 were amended to reflect changes in the membership, election, tenure, and limitation of tenure of the Diocesan Council. The membership of the council was increased from 15 to 16 members and its composition changed from seven (7) clergy plus the Bishop and seven (7) lay members to six (6) clergy plus the Bishop and nine (9) lay members. Nine (9) members would represent convocations, an increase from six (6). Tenure was increased from a term of two (2) to three (3) years with no succession. The implementing procedures for this amendment are contained in Resolution IV found on page 100 of the Journal for 1993.

Journal of 2003, p. 9 and Journal of 2002, pp 11 and 29: deleted the last sentence of Sec. 1 and added a new sentence requiring that any clergy member be canonically resident in this Diocese.

ARTICLE XI Board of Managers of Trust Funds

Sec. 1. Members of Board - Tenure.

The Board of Managers of Trust Funds of the Diocese shall be comprised of the Bishop, as chair ex-officio, and six (6) other managers, all laity, two (2) to be elected each year by the convention for a term of three (3) years. The initial election(s) of members shall be such that approximately one-third of the members are serving one (1) year terms, approximately one-third two (2) year terms and one-third three (3) year terms in order to establish a rotation of committee membership.

- Sec. 2. **Vacancies in Board.**
(a) If the Episcopate be vacant, the President of the Standing Committee shall be a member of the Board.
(b) A vacancy among the elected members of the Board shall be filled by the remaining members; the appointee to serve until the next annual Convention, when a successor shall be elected to fill the unexpired term, if any part of it remain.
- Sec. 3. **Acting Chairperson.**
(a) In the absence of the Bishop, the Board shall designate one of its members to act as chairperson.
(b) If the Episcopate be vacant, the President of the Standing committee shall be chairperson during the vacancy.
- Sec. 4. **Functions of Board.**
The Board of Managers of Trust Funds shall be the Board of Estates authorized by *Chapter 596 of the Acts of the General Assembly of Maryland of 1908*, with such duties and powers as are therein specified, and, in addition, shall perform such other duties as may be committed to it from time to time by resolution of Convention or by canon.

Journal of 1996, pp. 12 & 56: Section 1 was amended to increase the membership from 3 to 6 in order to get better attendance.

ARTICLE XII Other Diocesan Officers, Committees, Commissions and Trustees

- Sec 1. **Appointment by Convention.**
The Convention shall have power and authority to appoint or cause to be appointed such other Diocesan officers, committees, commissions and trustees, not herein specifically provided for, as it shall from time to time deem wise and expedient to carry on the work of the Diocese.
- Sec. 2. **Interim Appointment.**
The Bishop or the Standing Committee, if the Episcopate be vacant, shall have power and authority between sessions of Convention to appoint such other Diocesan officers, committees, commissions and trustees not herein specifically provided for, as the Bishop, or the Standing Committee, as the case may be, shall from time to time deem wise and expedient to carry on the work of the Diocese. Such appointment shall terminate at the date of the next annual or special Convention, at which time the Bishop, or the Standing Committee, as the case may be, shall recommend the continuance, if such is desirable, of such officer, committee, commission or trustee and shall submit nominations thereto for approval and confirmation by the Convention.

- Sec. 3. **Exercise of Power.**
The powers of appointment herein authorized may be exercised with or without special canon or enabling resolution of the Convention.

ARTICLE XIII
Parishes-Separate Congregations – Missions

- Sec. 1. **Parishes.**
The convention shall have power to
- (a) alter and adjust boundaries between contiguous parishes;
 - (b) erect new parishes outside the boundaries of existing parishes, and
 - (c) divide or unite parishes subject to the consent of the vestries of the parishes affected thereby.
- The Convention shall adopt such canons as may be necessary to effectively exercise the provisions of this section.
- Sec. 2. **Separate Congregations.**
The Convention, by canon, shall adopt such rules and regulations as it shall deem to be necessary and expedient to govern the admission of separate congregations into union with the convention, provided, the rights of existing parishes are not thereby affected without the prior consent of the vestries of the parishes involved.
- Sec. 3. **Mission Congregations.**
The Convention, by canon shall adopt such rules and regulations as it shall deem necessary and expedient to govern the organization of missions, either within or outside the bounds of an existing parish, looking toward the eventual erection of a new parish, provided, the rights of existing parishes are not thereby affected without the prior consent of the vestries of the parishes involved.
- Sec. 4. **Concerning Parish Bylaws.**
Each parish and separate congregation shall have authority to govern its internal affairs through bylaws in accordance with the provisions of Maryland law. Parish bylaws shall regulate the following aspects of parish operations:
- (a) membership in the parish or separate congregation;
 - (b) the conduct of congregational meetings including the date, time and place of the meeting, the method of giving notice for the meeting, the number of members required to form a quorum, the qualification of voters, the officers of the meeting, parliamentary procedure, and the purpose of the meeting

(provided that a congregational meeting must be held a minimum of once each year);

- (c) the organization, role, and authority of the vestry;
- (d) the regulation of the vestry including the date, time and place of meetings, the method of giving notice of meetings, the number of members required to form a quorum, parliamentary procedure, the purpose of the meetings, order of business, and officers (provided that the vestry must meet a minimum of one time each year);
- (e) the qualifications, number, oath of office, term, powers, and duties of vestry members;
- (f) the election, re-election, removal, replacement, and continuance in office of vestry members;
- (g) the election, re-election, removal, replacement, and continuance in the office of the parish officers including the senior warden, junior warden, treasurer, registrar, and such other officers as the bylaws may permit;
- (h) the qualifications, number, oath of office, term, powers, and duties of parish or congregational officers including the senior warden, junior warden, treasurer, registrar, and such other officers as the bylaws may permit;
- (i) the election, calling, removal, compensation, powers, duties, and obligations of the rector and other clergy, provided the relevant bylaw provisions comply with the constitution and canons of the Episcopal Church and of this diocese;
- (j) the control and regulation of property, assets, and investments;
- (k) prior to their adoption, all proposed by-laws shall be reviewed by Diocesan Committee on Constitutions and Canons.

Sec. 5. **Alienation of Property.**

No vestry of a parish or separate congregation shall sell, encumber or transfer any real property belonging to the parish or separate congregation without fully complying with all national and diocesan canons and obtaining the consent of a majority of the entire vestry.

Sec. 6. **Obligations of Parishes And Separate Congregations.**

Each parish and separate congregation shall be required to perform the following tasks:

- (a) adopt bylaws to govern its internal affairs;
- (b) elect a vestry in the manner dictated by its bylaws and fill any vacancy occurring in the membership of the vestry within ninety (90) days of the occurrence of said vacancy;
- (c) elect such officers as may be required by the bylaws, including a senior warden, junior warden, treasurer, and registrar, and fill any vacancy occurring in the said offices within thirty (30) days of the occurrence of said vacancy;

- (d) keep and maintain such records as may be required by state law, the constitutions and canons of the Episcopal Church, this constitution, the canons of this diocese, or its bylaws;
- (e) meet its just financial obligations to the diocese and other persons and entities;
- (f) elect delegates and alternates to the convention and ensure that it is represented at all meetings of the convention or the appropriate convocation;
- (g) arrange for a clergyperson to perform the offices of the church within the parish or the congregational church on a regular basis;
- (h) arrange for a worship service authorized by the canons of the Episcopal Church to be conducted within the parish or congregational church every Sunday and on such special days as the ecclesiastical authority may direct;
- (i) ensure the availability of the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist to all eligible persons within the parish or the community of the separate congregation;
- (j) ensure the availability of suitable persons to perform marriage and funeral services for eligible persons within the parish or the community of the separate congregation;
- (k) hold congregational and vestry meetings at such times as the bylaws may require, said meetings being held at least once each year;
- (l) perform any other task required by the canons of the diocese or the Episcopal Church.

Sec. 7. **Nonfunctioning Congregations.**

Nonfunctioning parishes, separate congregations or missions shall be dealt with as set forth below.

- (a) Parish, separate congregation or mission which fails to have monthly celebrations of the Eucharist for a period in excess of six (6) months shall be deemed nonfunctioning by the ecclesiastical authority.
- (b) The ecclesiastical authority may deem a parish or separate congregation nonfunctioning if it fails to meet its one or more of its obligations under Section 6 after its Registrar has been given written notice from the ecclesiastical authority citing the specific obligation involved and giving the parish or separate congregation a minimum of six (6) months to perform the said obligation.
- (c) The ecclesiastical authority shall confirm that each parish, separate congregation and mission holds a monthly celebration of the Eucharist.
- (d) Sixty (60) days prior to the meeting of the convention, the ecclesiastical authority shall deliver to the secretary of convention a report stating which parishes, separate

- congregations, and missions the ecclesiastical authority deems to be nonfunctioning, this report shall be updated on the first day of the meeting of convention.
- (e) During the annual meeting of the convention, the secretary shall lay before the convention the report described in section 7(d). After due consideration of the report, convention shall accept, reject, or amend the report as it deems appropriate.
 - (f) Should convention accept the ecclesiastical authority's report that any parish, separate congregation, or mission is nonfunctioning, the convention will deal with the nonfunctioning body in one of the ways set forth below.
 - (i) In the case of a nonfunctioning parish or separate congregation, the convention shall remove the officers and vestry of the nonfunctioning parish, or separate congregation, rescind the bylaws of the nonfunctioning parish, adopt new bylaws for the nonfunctioning parish providing for its governance by a three (3) member board of conservators, and elect a three (3) member board of conservators to dissolve the parish or separate congregation. Immediately upon its dissolution, the nonfunctioning parish or separate congregation shall become a mission.
 - (ii) In the case of a nonfunctioning mission, the convention shall dissolve the mission and direct the ecclesiastical authority to transfer its property and other assets to an adjoining parish.
 - (g) The ecclesiastical authority shall take any steps necessary to implement a decision of the convention taken in accordance with section 7(f) above.

Journal of 1999, p. 91: amended because of repeal of the Vestry Act.

ARTICLE XIV

Adoption of Canons by Convention

Sec. 1. **Power and Authority.**

The Convention shall have full power and authority to adopt such canons as it shall from time to time deem to be necessary and expedient to regulate the usual and normal functions of the Diocese as an integral part of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

Sec. 2. **Restrictions.**

The terms and provisions of such canons as shall be adopted may be in furtherance of, but shall not be in conflict with, any of the provisions of the Constitution and Canons of General Convention, the Charter,

Constitution and Canons of this Diocese, or the laws of the State of Maryland affecting the Diocese of Easton.

ARTICLE XV
Amendments to Constitution

Sec. 1. **Initial Proposal.**

Amendments to this Constitution shall be made in the following manner:

- (a) A proposed amendment shall be reduced to writing and shall be forwarded to the Committee on Constitution and Canons at least ninety (90) days before the meeting of any annual Convention; the Committee on Constitution and Canons shall then consider all such proposals submitted to it, and shall submit them to the Convention with appropriate recommendations.
- (b) If, after consideration, the amendment shall be approved by a majority in each order of the members of Convention entitled to vote therein, voting thereon separately, said amendment shall be tabled for the time being, and an exact copy of the proposed amendment shall be transmitted by the Secretary of Convention in a separate communication to the vestry of each parish and separate congregation, to the Chapter of Trinity Cathedral and to the Trustees of each diocesan mission entitled to representation in the Convention at least sixty (60) days before the next annual meeting of the Convention.

Sec. 2. **Final Proposal.**

At the annual meeting of the Convention next following the meeting at which such proposed amendment was initially introduced, approved and tabled, it shall be lifted from the table and reconsidered, and if it shall be again approved by a majority of all members in each order entitled to vote, each order voting separately thereon, such amendment shall become effective forthwith.

Journal of 1965, p. 38; Journal of 1966, pp. 11, 37: Section I (b) corrected for typographical errors and amended to include reference to Trinity Cathedral and to Diocesan Missions.

This was completed using the Constitution and Canons published in the 2001 Journal as a base. It is updated through 2007. Please forward any corrections or changes to David Bryan at dcb1@goeaston.net or 410-822-6872.

